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AUTHOR Johnson, Julie M.
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ABSTRACT

An assessment of the needs of the economically disadvantaged measured the importance of specific home economics content for high school students. Mailed questionnaires were returned by 470 parents of economically and noneconomically disadvantaged students and representatives from the Nebraska Department of Social Services. The 136 concepts used in the questionnaire were divided into 8 content areas. Using the overall means as a guide for the relative importance of each content area, it appeared that both groups of parents and the agency representatives ranked the content areas in approximately the same order: employability skills, child development/parenting, management and other processes, consumer education, family relationships, food and nutrition, clothing and textiles, and housing and home furnishings. These areas roughly corresponded with state and federal priorities. Items within each content area varied in importance. Generally speaking, economically disadvantaged parents saw home economics concepts as more important than the other two groups. There were significant differences between the economically disadvantaged parents and the noneconomically disadvantaged parents in almost half of the 136 concepts and between the economically disadvantaged and agency representatives in 36.8 percent of the 136 concepts. The noneconomically disadvantaged parents and agency representatives generally saw the concepts in a similar way. (YLB)

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NEBRASKA HOME ECONOMICS

Needs Assessment

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Project Director
University of Nebraska

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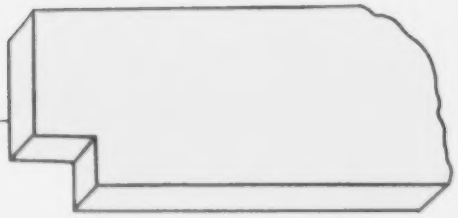
Nebraska Home Economics Needs Assessment



Participating Schools

Alliance City Schools
David City Public Schools
Hartington Public Schools
Harvard Public Schools
South Sioux City Public Schools
Fremont Public Schools
Benkelman Public Schools
Maywood Public Schools
Burwell Jr.-Sr. High School
Trenton Public Schools
Fairbury Public Schools
Loup County High School
Clarks Public Schools
Humphrey Public Schools
Falls City Public Schools
Litchfield Public Schools
Wheeler Central Schools
Bayard Public Schools
Stanton Community Schools
Thedford Rural High School
Ord Public Schools
Winside Public Schools
Centura Public Schools
West Point Public Schools

Social Service Agency Participation
Nebraska Department of Social Services

Income Maintenance & Protective Service Workers from the following local offices

Alliance
Broken Bow
Columbus
Dakota City
Fairbury
Fremont
Grand Island
Hastings
Imperial
McCook
Nebraska City
Norfolk
North Platte
Pierce
Seward
Sidney

Director

Dr. Julie M. Johnson
Consumer Science & Education
College of Home Economics
University of Nebraska
Lincoln, NE 68583-0801

Graduate Assistant

Donna J. Hutchens

Advisory Council

Brenda Davis
Benkelman Public Schools

Denise Haag
Fairbury Public Schools

Cathy Kloch
Alliance City Schools

Dr. Jean Memken
University of Nebraska

Jennifer Peterson
Fremont High School

Dale Rawson
Benkelman Public Schools

Amy Richardson
Department of Social Services
Lexington, NE

Daryl Wusk
Department of Social Services
Seward, NE

Project Monitor

Nancy Murdock
Nebraska Department of Education
Div. of Vocational Education

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The Economically Disadvantaged: The Nation And Nebraska

Who are the economically disadvantaged?

The term "economically disadvantaged" is often used to describe the poor or their condition. However, other terms such as low income, poverty, or economically depressed have also been used to designate those persons or areas that do not have as many economic resources available to them as the average American individual or family.

The largest number of economically disadvantaged families include: rural families, single female-headed households with minor children, and minorities. These groups often parallel low educational attainment levels. Generally speaking, the lower the educational attainment level, the lower the expected income.

The Nation's Economically Disadvantaged

In 1983, the annual incidence of poverty in the United States was 15.2 percent. This figure is higher than any year since 1966. The number of poor American children has increased by more than 3 million since 1968. It is estimated that 13.7 million or 22 percent of children under 18 now live in poverty. This has increased from 14.3 percent since 1969-70 (U. S. Department of Commerce, 1984).

These statistics tend to give "snapshots" of information related to poverty because data is taken from traditional cross-sectional surveys conducted at a single point in time. The Panel Study of 5,000 Families, a longitudinal study begun in 1968, perhaps provides a more complete picture than the Census Bureau information (Duncan, 1984). Duncan found that 25 percent of the population experienced temporary poverty of one to two years during the ten year period 1968-1978 and only 2.6 percent experienced persistent poverty of eight or more years during this period. In other words, one-fourth, a suprisingly large portion of the population, experienced poverty for relatively short periods of time. A small, but by no means insignificant portion of the population, experienced poverty on a long term or persistent basis.

Panel Study findings indicate the biggest factor contributing to temporary poverty is related to changes in family composition, such as death or divorce. The economic status of women and children is particularly sensitive to the structure of the family. Other causes of temporary poverty are related to unemployment due to involuntary job changes, illness, or disability. There is no segment of the population which is immune to experiencing temporary poverty.

Nebraska's Economically Disadvantaged

In 1979, more than 8 percent of Nebraska's families were below the poverty level. Thirty-one counties in Nebraska have poverty rates of 13 percent or more. These counties, less populated and with no cities larger than 2,500, typically have lost population for several decades, and are heavily dependent on agriculture (Purcell, 1982).

Based on 1979 figures, rural population poverty rate is nearly double that of urban families. Approximately 6 percent of all urban families live below poverty level compared to 11.3 percent of rural families. When households with [redacted] income levels (125 percent of poverty level) are considered, 8.9 percent of urban families and 16.1 percent of rural families have incomes near or below poverty levels.

In Nebraska the number of females with minor children and no husband present has been increasing in both rural and urban areas. In 1960, single-female parents made up 4.9 percent of all Nebraska families with minor children, compared to 12.0 percent in 1980. More than 25 percent of these families had income below the poverty level. About 90 percent had children under 18 years old. When households with [redacted] income levels (125 percent of poverty level) are taken into consideration, the poverty rate for female-headed households increases to nearly 33 percent.

Poverty is also over-represented by minority populations in Nebraska. Native American and Black families in Nebraka are the most likely to have incomes below poverty level. Although the total number of white families (29,152) below poverty level is greater than non-white families (4,188), the percentage of white families is only 7.3 percent. An estimated 30.4 percent of Native American families, 26.2 percent of Black families, 14.2 percent of Spanish families, and 16.7 percent of Asian families have incomes below the poverty level.

When one combines the factors of minority status and family structure, the results are startling. More than 57 percent of Native American female householders in Nebraska live below poverty level as do 49.4 percent of the Black female householders, 42.2 percent of those of Spanish origin, and 20.9 percent of white female householders.

There is a dramatic difference in estimated median income in relation to education for males and females 18 years of age or older. In 1979, males with 0-7 years of elementary school had an estimated median income of

$5,426, while females with the same educational level had an estimated median income of $3,070. With a high school diploma, the males income rose to $12,831, while the females estimated median income was $5,377. Males with four years of college had estimated median incomes of $17,450 and females $8,111. With no education a female starts at a lower salary level than her male counterpart, and can only expect to increase her income by 264 percent after four years of college. However, a male can earn almost double a female's income with no education and can increase his earnings by 321 percent with four years of college.

Economically disadvantaged families **do** exist in Nebraska in ever-increasing numbers. The current economic crunch and its impact on families may continue to be felt for some time.

Key Questions*

How many families in the local district are economically disadvantaged? What types of families are included (rural, urban, minorities, female-headed households)?

What percentage of these families are persistently poor or experience poverty for only relatively short periods of time?

What percentage of the students currently enrolled in the district in grades 7-12 are economically disadvantaged (eligible for free or reduced school lunch meals)?

Has this number increased, decreased, or remained the same over the past five years?

What percentage of the students currently enrolled in the home economics education program are economically disadvantaged?

Is this percentage greater than, less than, or the same as the percent of the total student body who are economically disadvantaged?

Has this number increased, decreased, or remained the same over the past five years?

Are there more economically disadvantaged students enrolled in certain courses within the home economics program?

What is being done, or could be done to encourage more economically disadvantaged students to enroll in the home economics program?

* Following each major section of this report, key questions are listed which will help the reader focus on how they can apply the information to their local situation. Home economics teachers, administrators, curriculum directors, advisory council members, school board members, and other educators may want to address these questions as they use this report in planning, evaluating, and promoting home economics education programs at the local level. Social service representatives may also want to examine these and other questions as they use this report to improve services to their clients.

The Role Of Home Economics In Educating Today's Youth

Current Enrollment and Impact

Whether one views the problems of the disadvantaged from the culturalistic perspective (the cultural problems of the disadvantaged determine their lower socioeconomic status) or the situational perspective (behavior patterns are a result of the situation the disadvantaged are in), a basic educational concern is to help individuals and families prevent and solve common problems they confront in daily living (Waxman, 1983). Home economics education programs make a valuable contribution to the quality of life of economically disadvantaged individuals and families.

Since the early beginnings of the home economics movement in 1899, leaders of this movement chose to seek preventative solutions to common problems in home and family life. By 1918 enrollment in home economics in secondary programs in the United Stated was 8,439. By 1959, 95.5 percent of all schools in the United States offered home economics, and almost every girl had at least one class in home economics (Coon, 1962). Today there are more than 3 million boys and girls enrolled in home economics classes in secondary schools. In Nebraska there were almost 18,000 young men and women enrolled in secondary home economics programs in 1985. Data collected in 1979 revealed that home economics programs in the United States enrolled a higher percentage of Blacks (22 percent) than other vocational programs (Drew, Jones & Siegel, 1981). During the 1983-84 school year more than 3,000 students (17 percent) enrolled in home economics were economically disadvantaged. (Nebraska Department of Education, 1984).

What does all this mean? Secondary home economics classes have tremendous potential impact. Home economics classes can help students from all socioeconomic levels learn concepts in child development and parenting, consumer education, family relationships, food and nutrition, housing and home furnishings, and clothing and textiles. Home economics also includes learning employability skills, resource management, critical thinking and other processes. Effectiveness studies have shown 1) home economics students have better nutrition practices than non-home economics students, 2) students instructed in the use of credit reportedly use credit less often, 3) home economics students report using consumer knowledge to make consumer related decisions, 4) students in child development and family life education classes are more aware and sensitive to the needs of children, and expect more equal marital roles, 5) employers tend to give preference to those who have taken home economics classes, and 6) employers feel that those who have had home economics have favorable attitudes and satisfactory job performances (Griggs and McFadden, 1980).

Rationale and Objectives for the Study

Because of the impact of home economics programs, it is imperative that these programs include subject matter that will help economically disadvantaged individuals and families improve the quality of home and family life. In order to do this, home economics educators need the data necessary to determine the unique needs of the economically disadvantaged.

Addressing the needs of economically disadvantaged persons is one of the areas of emphasis within the Consumer and Homemaking Education section (Title IIB) of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984. At least one-third of the federal funds allocated to each state must be spent in economically depressed areas. In Nebraska, a portion of the federal funds have been used to identify the unique needs of individuals and families in economically depressed areas which can be addressed through home economics education programs. Information gathered through the project will be used in the development of curricula and instructional materials.

This project, funded through the Carl Perkins Act, had the following objectives:

1. Develop a model for conducting needs assessments for traditionally underserved populations in Nebraska, such as the economically disadvantaged.
2. Implement the model by conducting a statewide needs assessment to determine the special needs of the economically disadvantaged which may be addressed through secondary home economics programs in Nebraska.

In order to accomplish these objectives, three questions were addressed:

1. What are the needs of the economically disadvantaged in Nebraska?
2. Do professionals who work with the economically disadvantaged agree with their perception of the importance of teaching home economics concepts?
3. Are the needs of the economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged similar?

One way to determine the needs of the economically disadvantaged would be to have this group decide for themselves the importance of teaching various concepts that would help them as individuals and families. Ask-

ing professionals who work with this group the same question would give a different perspective. Asking the non-economically disadvantaged the same questions would enable educators to determine if their needs are similar. If the needs for the economically disadvantaged and the non-economically disadvantaged are similar, the development of curricula and instructional materials may be identical for both groups. If they are different, adjustments must be made.

Key Questions

How are home economics education programs in this district helping to improve the quality of life for economically disadvantaged individuals and families?

How can programs in this district better meet the needs of the economically disadvantaged?

For example, could adult education courses be offered in the areas of consumer education, nutrition, and/or parenting?

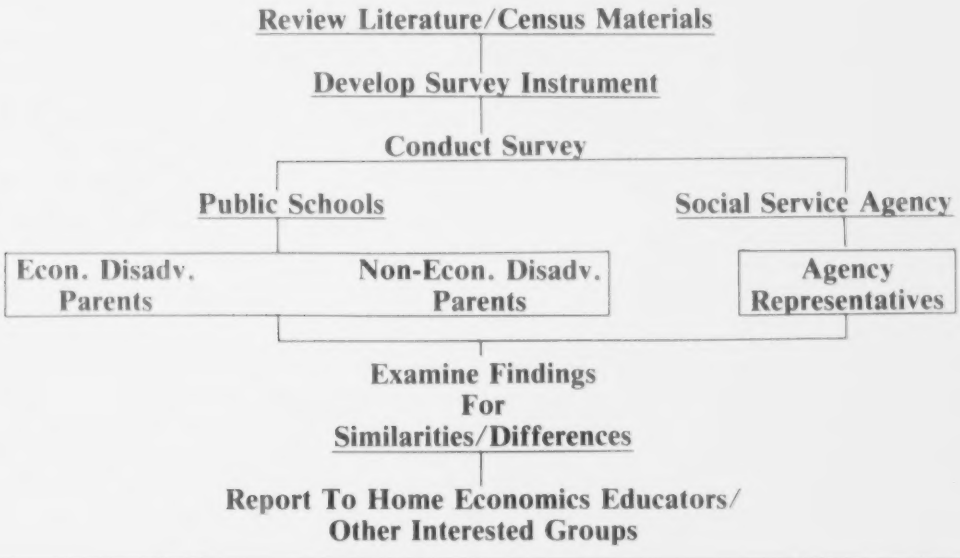
Are social service agencies and others aware of the home economics education programs in this district and how these programs can contribute to meeting the needs of the economically disadvantaged?

The Model

Instrumentation

The model in Figure 1 illustrates the process that was used to determine the needs of the economically disadvantaged in this study. After thoroughly reviewing the literature, an instrument was designed to measure the importance of specific home economics content for high school students. Respondents were to identify how important home economics concepts were by circling a number that represented their perception of its importance, i.e. 5 = essential, 4 = very important, 3 = important, 2 = little importance, or 1 = not important. A total of 136 concepts were divided into these content areas: Consumer Education, Management & Other Processes, Basic Employability Skills, Food & Nutrition, Housing and Home Furnishings, Child Development and Parenting, Family Relationships, and Clothing and Textiles.

Figure 1. Needs Assessment Model

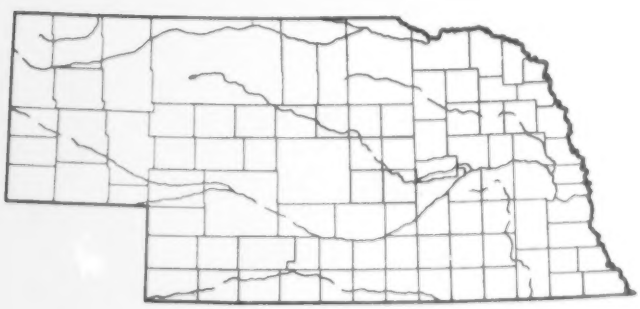


The questionnaire was reviewed and validated by a panel of home economics subject matter specialists and by members of an advisory council. The final instrument was a compilation of those items which subject matter specialists and the advisory council felt were the most important concepts for secondary students. The advisory council included representatives from the Nebraska Department of Social Services, home economics teachers, a school administrator, and a statistical advisor. See the appendix for the final instrument.

Sample Selection/Data Collection

A random sample of economically depressed counties in Nebraska was selected based on the Nebraska State Department of Vocational Education's classification of these areas. Figure 2 highlights the selected counties. Three populations within these counties were surveyed: 1) parents of economically disadvantaged students, 2) parents of non-economically disadvantaged students, and 3) representatives from the Nebraska Department of Social Services. These agency representatives, who work with economically disadvantaged families, were from the local offices in each selected county.

Figure 2. Selected Counties



Letters were sent to home economics teachers and administrators of selected schools within the designated counties asking if they were willing to assist in gathering data from the designated populations in the study. Twenty-four schools indicated a desire to participate.

For the purpose of this study, those persons who qualified for Free and Reduced School Lunch Meals were identified as economically disadvantaged. The names of parents from the school's list of students who received Free and Reduced School Lunch Meals were randomly selected. (Since the names from this list are strictly confidential, procedures were designed to guarantee this confidentality.) The non-economically disadvantaged population was randomly selected from the school's general population who were not participants in the Free and Reduced School Lunch Meals program. Ten names were selected from each group of economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged at each of the 24 schools from a total of 480 names of parents. Each administrator received specific directions for this random selection process.

Names and addresses of two groups of social service workers (Income Maintenance and Protective Service) were provided by the Nebraska Department of Social Services. The entire population of agency representatives (78) from the selected counties was surveyed.

The procedure for data collection consisted of three mailings to the sample populations: initial questionnaire, post card reminder, and follow-up questionnaire to those who had not responded. Each school was mailed a package containing the materials for the three mailings plus specific, easy-to-follow directions for each procedure. Questionnaires and follow-up reminders were mailed directly to the agency representatives by the University researcher. All questionnaires were to be returned anonymously to the University researcher to insure confidentiality.

The data were analyzed by using analysis of variance and Tukey-HSD follow-up procedures. Using these procedures, each question was analyzed to determine if there were differences among the mean scores of the economically disadvantaged parents, and the agency representatives. In order to do this, the mean of all responses is used for each group. For example, one question was:

How important is this content for high school students?

	Not important	Little importance	Important	Very Important	Essential
Resolving Family Conflict	1	2	3	4	5

If three persons from one group answered "essential", "essential" and "important", they would have circled 5, 5, and 3. The mean of their score would be 4.33 (5 + 5 + 3 divided by 3 persons = 4.33). The mean for the total group would then be compared to the means of the other groups for each question to see if differences existed.

Key Questions

Could the questionnaire used for this study be adapted and used to collect data at the local level

- **from students currently enrolled in the home economics program?**
- **from students who are not currently enrolled in the program?**
- **from parents?**
- **from graduates of the program (follow up)?**
- **from the general public or clients from social service agencies?**

How could data collected at the local level be used in program planning and development?

How do the results of survey(s) conducted locally compare with statewide data included in this report?

The Findings And Discussion

Four hundred seventy questionnaires were returned from all groups with an overall response rate of 84.2 percent. Agency representatives had the highest response rate with 75 returned (96.2 percent). The non-economically disadvantaged rate of return was 87.7 percent (208 returned) and the economically disadvantaged rate of response was 77.9 percent (187 returned).

The 136 concepts used in the questionnaire were divided into eight content areas. Using the overall means as a guide for the relative importance of each content area, it appears that both groups of parents and the agency representatives ranked the content areas in approximately the same order: Employability Skills, Child Development/Parenting, Management and Other Processes, Consumer Education, Family Relationships, Food and Nutrition, Clothing and Textiles, and Housing and Home Furnishings (see Table 1). This ranking reinforces three areas of emphasis which have been given priority at the federal and state level: (1) family living and parenthood education, (2) nutrition education, and (3) consumer education.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 gives additional special emphasis to managing resources, making consumer choices, managing home and work responsibilities, improving responses to crises, strengthening parenting skills, assisting the aged and handicapped, improving nutrition, conserving limited resources, understanding the impact of technology on life and work, and applying home economics skills to jobs and careers.

These data are in direct contrast to recent findings from a University of Nebraska Home Economics Image Study (Johnson, 1982) which reported that the general

Table 1. Ranking of Each Content Area

	Econ. Disadv. Parents		Non. Econ. Disadv. Parents		Agency Representatives	
Rank	**Content**	**Mean**	**Content**	**Mean**	**Content**	**Mean**
1	Employability Skills	4.06	Employability Skills	3.92	Employability Skills	4.12
2	Child Dev./Parenting	3.93	Management/Other Processes	3.82	Child Dev./Parenting	4.09
3	Management/Other Processes	3.91	Child Dev./Parenting	3.73	Management/Other Processes	3.83
4	Consumer Education	3.83	Consumer Education	3.64	Family Relationships	3.82
5	Family Relationships	3.82	Family Relationships	3.63	Consumer Education	3.57
6	Food & Nutrition	3.66	Food & Nutrition	3.44	Food & Nutrition	3.31
7	Clothing & Textiles	3.43	Clothing & Textiles	3.19	Housing & Home Furnishings	3.18
8	Housing & Home Furnishings	3.41	Housing & Home Furnishings	3.14	Clothing & Textiles	3.05

Scores were assigned as follows: 1 = not important, 2 = little importance, 3 = important, 4 = very important, and 5 = essential

public thought of home economics as "cooking and sewing." They did not see home economics as a broad content area that incorporated management, consumer education, employability skills, or other areas. Perhaps what the public feels is needed, is not what they perceive is being taught.

The next area of primary interest was to determine the importance of each of the 136 concepts and whether or not the economically disadvantaged saw the concepts as more important (or less important) than the other groups. Tables 2-10 show these differences. (The concepts listed in each table have been abbreviated. A more complete list of each concept is included in the appendix.) Each table uses two different ways to express differences between groups. The first way is by color coding. Colored bars represent differences between the various groups. The colors represent significant differences between the economically disadvantaged parents and the non-economically disadvantaged parents (brown), between the economically disadvantaged parents and the agency representatives (salmon), and significant differences between the economically disadvantaged parents and both of the other groups (orange).

Colored bars only show differences that involve the *economically disadvantaged*, but superscripts are used to show all the differences between groups, including differences between the non-economically disadvantaged and the agency representatives. Means with different superscripts are significantly different. For example, if the mean for the economically disadvantaged parent group has an "a" as a superscript and the other parent group also has an "a", there is no difference between each group. However, if the agency representative's mean has a "b", there is a significant difference between each parent group and the agency representative group.

Each content area will be briefly discussed using information from the tables. The color coding and use of superscripts should facilitate the identification of the differences between groups.

Employability Skills. *(See Table 2.)* Looking at the overall means for the eight content areas, Employability Skills was ranked first by all three groups. Based on the means, economically disadvantaged parents saw one concept (combining home/job) as more important than

Table 2. EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS Concepts Needed by Home Economics Students

Concepts	Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 187		Non-Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 208		Agency Rep. N = 75	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Developing Skills/Behaviors which lead to job success	1	4.28	1	4.25	1	4.47
Maintaining relationships with employer, etc.	2	4.14	3	4.00	3	4.24
Job Application	3	4.14	2	4.10	2	4.28
*Combining Home/Job Responsibilities	4	4.11^{a}	5	3.87^{b}	5	4.13^{ab}
*Job Hunting Techniques	5	4.06^{ab}	4	3.95^{a}	4	4.23^{b}
Job Training Knowledge	6	4.01	6	3.86	8	4.00
Assessing Personal Characteristics	7	3.99	9	3.80	9	3.96
Improving Appearance	8	3.98	7	3.84	7	4.04
Effective Communication	9	3.94	8	3.81	6	4.05
Explore Career Possibilities	10	3.91	10	3.75	10	3.84

Scores were assigned as follows: 1 = not important, 2 = little importance, 3 = important, 4 = very important, 5 = essential

*Means with different superscripts (a, b, c) were significantly different at the five percent level in the Tukey-HSD test.

Key

Tables are color-keyed to show a significant difference between:

- = Econ. Disadv. Parents and Non-Econ. Disadv. Parent
- = Econ. Disadv. Parents and Agency Representatives
- = Econ. Disadv. Parents and Both Other Groups

Table 3. CHILD DEVELOPMENT/PARENTING
Concepts Needed by Home Economics Students

Concepts	Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 187 Rank	Mean	Non-Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 208 Rank	Mean	Agency Rep. N = 75 Rank	Mean
*Child Abuse	1	4.28[a]	4	4.05[b]	4	4.45[a]
Responsibilities of Parenting	2	4.25	1	4.24	5	4.43
*Readiness for Parenting	3	4.25[a]	2	4.24[a]	1	4.52[b]
*Safety/First Aid	4	4.20[a]	9	3.86[b]	12	4.03[ab]
*Conception/Birth Process	5	4.17[a]	5	3.98[a]	3	4.48[b]
*Birth Control	6	4.12[a]	8	3.90[a]	2	4.49[b]
Present Choices/Future	7	4.11	3	4.12	6	4.36
*Child Development (physical, social, etc.)	8	4.07[a]	10	3.86[b]	9	4.23[a]
*Parenting/Self Esteem	9	4.02[ab]	6	3.99[a]	7	4.29[b]
*Selecting Day Care	10	3.98[a]	15	3.58[b]	10	4.19[a]
Developing Morals	11	3.98	7	3.90	11	4.05
*Decision Making/Family Planning	12	3.93[a]	11	3.84[a]	8	4.29[b]
*Nutrition/Child Health	13	3.90[a]	12	3.69[b]	16	3.89[ab]
*Environment (home & neighborhood)/ child	14	3.86[a]	13	3.63[b]	13	4.03[a]
*Conflicting Views/Raising Child	15	3.82[a]	16	3.53[b]	15	3.99[a]
Creativity in Children	16	3.79	14	3.61	21	3.55
*Heredity	17	3.63[a]	19	3.29[b]	20	3.59[a]
*Social Cultural Influences on Parenting	19	3.57[a]	20	3.25[b]	17	3.72[a]
*Parenting Affects Society	20	3.52[ab]	17	3.38[a]	18	3.69[b]
*Community Services	21	3.48[a]	21	3.06[b]	19	3.67[a]

Scores were assigned as follows: 1 = not important, 2 = little importance, 3 = important, 4 = very important, 5 = essential

*Means with different superscripts (a, b, c) were significantly different at the five percent level in the Tukey-HSD test.

Key

Tables are color-keyed to show a significant difference between:

= Econ. Disadv. Parents and Non-Econ. Disadv. Parent
= Econ. Disadv. Parents and Agency Representatives
= Econ. Disadv. Parents and Both Other Groups

the other parent group. The means of 3.75 and 4.47 indicate all groups felt the concepts of this area were very important or essential.

Nebraska home economics educators and federal legislation have placed high importance on employability skills in recent years. This study confirms the continued need for this emphasis. Since home economics programs and other vocational programs may be one of the few areas where employability is addressed, home economics educators who are not incorporating employability skills into their program, should give this area additional consideration.

This study also may help to dispel the notion that the economically disadvantaged are not interested in working, finding a job, or increasing their employability.

Child Development/Parenting. *(See Table 3.)* This area was ranked second by economically disadvantaged parents and agency representatives and third by non-economically disadvantaged parents. The means for agency representatives were numerically higher than all other groups except for four of the 21 concepts (safety/first aid, nutrition/child health, creativity, heredity). This might be explained by the fact that some

of the agency representatives work with families that have severe problems such as child abuse and neglect. Child abuse had the highest mean for the economically disadvantaged parents and high means for the other two groups.

Agency representatives also saw five of the 21 concepts as more important than the economically disadvantaged parents (readiness for parenting, conception/birth process, birth control, decision-making/family planning, selecting child-rearing practices).

These areas all seem to be related to parenting or family planning. Strengthening parenting skills, one of the priorities in federal legislation, is highly ranked by all the groups in this study.

There also were differences between each parent group. Economically disadvantaged parents felt 11 of the 21 concepts in this area were more important than the non-economically disadvantaged parents thought they were (child abuse, safety/first aid, child development, selecting day care, nutrition/child health, environment, conflicting views/raising child, heredity, selecting child rearing practices, social cultural influences, community services).

In most of the content areas the non-economically disadvantaged parents seemed to rank the concepts at a similar level to the agency representatives. This content area proved to be an exception. There were more differences between the non-economically disadvantaged parents and the agency representatives in this area than in any other. Agency representatives said 15 of the 21 concepts were more important (child abuse, readiness for parenting, conception/birth process, birth control, child development, parenting/self esteem, selecting day care, decision making/family planning, environment, conflicting views/raising child, heredity, selecting child-rearing practices, social cultural influences, parenting affecting society, community services). Again, this may be related to the specific job that the agency representatives are involved in.

Management and Other Processes. *(See Table 4.)* Management and Other Processes ranked second in overall means by the non-economically disadvantaged parents and third by economically disadvantaged parents and agency representatives. This is another area that is given high priority in federal legislation and is often thought to be the foundation of home economics. This specific content is generally integrated into other content areas.

Table 4. MANAGEMENT and PROCESS Concepts Needed by Home Economics Students

Concepts	Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 187		Non-Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 208		Agency Rep. N = 75	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Attitude/Responsible for Decisions	1	4.35	1	4.26	1	4.43
Coping with change	2	4.18	2	4.13	2	4.25
Managing Personal/Family Resources	3	4.11	4	4.06	4	3.99
Ability to Make Decisions/ Solve Problems	4	4.07	3	4.09	3	4.07
Determining Values, Goals, etc.	5	3.93	5	3.81	5	3.96
Using Management Process	7	3.72	6	3.67	7	3.54
Exploring Alternatives	8	3.70	8	3.58	6	3.77
*Evaluating Claims in Media	9	3.31[a]	9	3.17[ab]	9	2.93[b]

Scores were assigned as follows: 1 = not important, 2 = little importance, 3 = important, 4 = very important, 5 = essential

*Means with different superscripts (a, b, c) were significantly different at the five percent level in the Tukey-HSD test.

Key

Tables are color-keyed to show a significant difference between:

= Econ. Disadv. Parents and Non-Econ. Disadv. Parent
= Econ. Disadv. Parents and Agency Representatives
= Econ. Disadv. Parents and Both Other Groups

Current curriculum development in Nebraska and other states follows the philosophy of incorporating the practical reasoning and critical thinking processes into home economics. Although the questions in this study did not specifically mention those processes, it is the researcher's belief that the high rank given to this area may lend credence to this effort.

Economically disadvantaged parents felt the concept area of work simplification was more important than the other group of parents and the agency representatives. Perhaps this is because they have a real need to combine home and job responsibilities. They also thought the area of evaluating claims in the media was more important than the agency representatives thought it was.

Consumer Education. *(See Table 5.)* Looking at the overall means for the eight content areas, Consumer Education ranks fourth by both parents groups and fifth by agency representatives. This is another area given priority at the federal and state level. Consumer Education is usually heavily concerned with management principles and is often integrated into other content areas. It is also taught separately.

Economically disadvantaged parents had numerically higher means for all the concepts except one (budgeting) and this mean was still very high. Economically disadvantaged parents felt seven of the 17 concepts were more important than the other parents felt they were (insurance, taxes and social security, consumer resources, transportation, consumer problems, compari-

Table 5. CONSUMER EDUCATION Concepts Needed by Home Economics Students

Concepts	Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 187		Non-Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 208		Agency Rep. N = 75	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Managing Checking Account	1	4.60	1	4.60	2	4.59
Budgeting	2	4.52	2	4.52	1	4.65
Financial Records	3	4.43	3	4.45	3	4.43
*Insurance	4	4.26[a]	5	3.91[b]	5	4.00[ab]
Use/Cost Credit	5	4.16	4	4.09	4	4.08
[redacted]						
*Savings Options	7	3.83[a]	7	3.67[ab]	8	3.51[b]
*Consumer Rights/Responsibilities	8	3.81[a]	8	3.61[ab]	10	3.37[b]
*Consumer Resources	9	3.72[a]	10	3.40[b]	6	3.67[ab]
[redacted]						
*Consumer/Economy	11	3.60[a]	9	3.42[ab]	13	3.15[b]
[redacted]						
Comparative Pricing	13	3.57	11	3.38	9	3.51
[redacted]						
Questioning Spending Patterns	15	3.41	13	3.36	12	3.24
[redacted]						
*Advertising (Purpose, Techniques, Analyzing)	17	3.02[a]	17	2.84[ab]	17	2.60[b]

Scores were assigned as follows: 1 = not important, 2 = little importance, 3 = important, 4 = very important, 5 = essential

*Means with different superscripts (a, b, c) were significantly different at the five percent level in the Tukey-HSD test.

Key

Tables are color-keyed to show a significant difference between:

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= Econ. Disadv. Parents and Both Other Groups

son of stores, and information sources). They also felt nine of the 17 concepts were more important than the agency representatives thought they were (taxes and social security, savings options, consumer rights and responsibilities, transportation, consumer economy, consumer problems, comparison of stores, information sources, and advertising).

It may be surprising that the means for the advertising concept are relatively low. The influence of advertising in our society appears to be pervasive, but perhaps is not as important as other areas for these groups.

Family Relationships. *(See Table 6.)* Family Relationships ranked fifth by both parent groups and fourth by the agency representatives. This was one of two areas in which there were no significant differences between the economically disadvantaged parents and the agency representatives. Preventing family violence, perhaps similar to the child abuse concept mentioned earlier, was again very important to all three groups. Federal legislation emphasizes "improving responses to individual and family crises" and "strengthening parenting skills," which would be related skills.

Economically disadvantaged parents felt eight of the 22 concepts were more important than the non-economically disadvantaged parents (family life cycle, identifying special needs, family structures, choosing lifestyles, community support services, family laws and regulations, stereotyping, families and culture). Agency

Table 6. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS Concepts Needed by Home Economics Students

Concepts	Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 187		Non-Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 208		Agency Rep. N = 75	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
*Prevent Family Violence	1	4.29^{ab}	2	4.14^{a}	1	4.44^{b}
Building Relationships/Coop.	2	4.22	1	4.15	6	4.11
Readiness for Commitments	3	4.19	3	4.13	2	4.33
Characteristics Life Partner	4	4.10	6	3.94	5	4.12
Managing Crisis	5	4.09	5	4.00	4	4.19
Resolving Conflict	6	4.08	4	4.05	3	4.20
Family Group Decision-Making	7	3.96	7	3.88	10	3.95
Attitudes Impact on Others	8	3.96	9	3.81	11	3.91
Human Sexuality	9	3.90	11	3.74	8	3.99
Effective Communication	10	3.89	8	3.88	9	3.99
Purpose of Family	11	3.88	12	3.71	12	3.88
*Realistic Expectations	12	3.87^{ab}	10	3.75^{a}	7	4.03^{b}
***Family Life Cycle**	**13**	**3.85^{a}**	**14**	**3.63^{b}**	**17**	**3.59^{ab}**
***Identifying Special Needs**	**14**	**3.84^{a}**	**15**	**3.57^{b}**	**18**	**3.56^{ab}**
Care of Elderly	15	3.81	13	3.66	13	3.73
***Family Structures**	**16**	**3.60^{a}**	**17**	**3.31^{b}**	**14**	**3.69^{a}**
Multiple Roles	17	3.57	16	3.39	15	3.61
***Choosing Lifestyle**	**18**	**3.52^{a}**	**18**	**3.23^{b}**	**16**	**3.61^{a}**
***Community Support Sources**	**19**	**3.49^{a}**	**21**	**3.07^{b}**	**19**	**3.51^{a}**
***Family Laws and Regulations**	**20**	**3.44^{a}**	**19**	**3.18^{b}**	**21**	**3.32^{ab}**
***Stereotyping**	**21**	**3.38^{a}**	**20**	**3.10^{b}**	**20**	**3.44^{a}**
***Families and Culture**	**22**	**3.14^{a}**	**22**	**2.72^{b}**	**22**	**3.00^{a}**

Scores were assigned as follows: 1 = not important, 2 = little importance, 3 = important, 4 = very important, 5 = essential

*Means with different superscripts (a, b, c) were significantly different at the five percent level in the Tukey-HSD test.

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= Econ. Disadv. Parents and Both Other Groups

representatives also saw many of the concepts as more important. Seven of the 22 concepts were more important than the non-economically disadvantaged parents saw them (prevent family violence, realistic expectations, family structures, choosing lifestyle, community support sources, stereotyping, and families and culture).

Food and Nutrition. *(See Table 7.)* Although the means for the Food and Nutrition area indicate that respondents thought the concepts were important or very important, the overall means rank it sixth by all three groups. Improving nutrition is another priority of the federal legislation and this emphasis seems to be warranted considering the means for those concepts that are related. However, concepts related to handling and preparing food also seem to be very important to all groups.

Economically disadvantaged parents thought the home economics concepts in this content area were more important than the agency representatives except for four concepts (safe/sanitary food handling, planning food buying, planning/preparing/serving food, preparing/storing food, preserving food, comparing food cost, conserving energy, small/large equipment, world food supply, time/cost/energy comparisons, changing food habits, calories/exercise, evaluating diets, nutritional claims, food choices). Both parent groups were significantly different for ten concepts in this content area. The economically disadvantaged

Table 7. FOOD and NUTRITION Concepts Needed by Home Economics Students

Concepts	Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 187		Non-Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 208		Agency Rep. N = 75	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Staying w/Food Budget	1	4.26	1	4.17	1	4.16
[redacted]						
Nutrition Needs of Family	6	3.96	3	3.85	2	3.88
Nutrition/Wellness	7	3.89	4	3.77	4	3.71
[redacted]						
*Time, Cost, Energy Comparisons	10	3.71[a]	11	3.53[ab]	11	3.29[b]
*Changing Food Habits	11	3.67[a]	8	3.61[ab]	9	3.39[b]
*Calories/Exercise	12	3.62[a]	9	3.61[a]	10	3.31[b]
[redacted]						
*Evaluating "Diets"	15	3.34[a]	13	3.23[ab]	15	2.97[b]
*Consumer Agencies	16	3.26[a]	18	2.83[b]	14	3.00[ab]
*Nutritional Claims	17	3.12[a]	16	2.98[ab]	17	2.75[b]
*Factors Affecting Food Choices	18	3.00[a]	17	2.82[ab]	18	2.63[b]
[redacted]						

Scores were assigned as follows: 1 = not important, 2 = little importance, 3 = important, 4 = very important, 5 = essential

*Means with different superscripts (a, b, c) were significantly different at the five percent level in the Tukey-HSD test.

Key

Tables are color-keyed to show a significant difference between:

= Econ. Disadv. Parents and Non-Econ. Disadv. Parent
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parents felt these ten areas were of greater importance (safe/sanitary food handling, planning food buying, planning/preparing/serving food, preparing/storing food, preserving food, comparing food cost, conserving energy, small/large equipment, world food supply, consumer agencies).

Clothing and Textiles. *(See Table 8).* This area is often thought to be an important part of home economics. Some home economics educators feel that their community expects a great deal of emphasis on clothing and textiles. However, this area was ranked seventh by both parent groups and eighth by agency representatives. Both maintaining clothing and choosing clothing within one's budget received numerically higher means than did concepts involving clothing construction. Again, perhaps surprisingly, advertising was not seen as important as other concepts. It received a similar mean in the consumer education section.

Economically disadvantaged parents felt ten of the 18 concepts were more important than the other parent group (labels, equipment, sewing, altering and recycling clothing, consumer rights, reasons for clothing choices, advertising, clothing/life cycle, ways to obtain clothing, and fads and fashion). They also felt that 12 of the 18 concepts were more important than the agency representatives felt they were (labels, equipment, sewing, altering and recycling clothing, consumer rights, reasons for clothing choices, advertising, maintaining clothing, color/line/design, altering patterns, evaluating fabric and construction, textile information).

Table 8. CLOTHING and TEXTILES Concepts Needed by Home Economics Students

Concepts	Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 187		Non-Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 208		Agency Rep. N = 75	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
*Maintaining Clothing (laundry, mending, etc.)	1	3.98[a]	2	3.82[ab]	2	3.67[b]
Choosing Clothing/Budget	2	3.96	1	3.83	1	3.87
Needs/Wants Clothing	5	3.57	3	3.50	3	3.35
*Clothing/Life Cycle	8	3.45[a]	12	3.11[b]	5	3.21[ab]
*Color, Line, Design	9	3.44[a]	5	3.33[a]	15	2.83[b]
*Altering Patterns	10	3.37[a]	7	3.21[a]	18	2.69[b]
*Evaluating Fabric & Construction	11	3.36[a]	9	3.19[a]	12	2.87[b]
Clothing/Decision Making	12	3.33	11	3.13	6	3.19
*Ways to Obtain Clothing	14	3.26[a]	14	2.93[b]	8	3.01[ab]
*Textile Information	15	3.24[a]	13	3.07[a]	16	2.75[b]
*Fads and Fashion	17	3.10[a]	17	2.81[b]	14	2.84[ab]

Scores were assigned as follows: 1 = not important, 2 = little importance, 3 = important, 4 = very important, 5 = essential

*Means with different superscripts (a, b, c) were significantly different at the five percent level in the Tukey-HSD test.

Key

Tables are color-keyed to show a significant difference between:

= Econ. Disadv. Parents and Non-Econ. Disadv. Parent
= Econ. Disadv. Parents and Agency Representatives
■ = Econ. Disadv. Parents and Both Other Groups

Table 9. HOUSING and HOME FURNISHINGS Concepts Needed by Home Economics Students

Concepts	Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 187 Rank	Mean	Non-Econ. Disadv. Parents N = 208 Rank	Mean	Agency Rep. N = 75 Rank	Mean
*Financial/Legal Aspects of Renting/Owning	1	4.06[a]	1	3.84[b]	2	3.80[ab]
*Making Home Safe	2	4.03[a]	2	3.75[b]	1	3.84[ab]
*Conserving Energy	3	4.03[a]	3	3.64[b]	4	3.55[b]
*Selecting Housing	4	3.65[a]	5	3.43[b]	3	3.60[ab]
Caring for Home	5	3.62	4	3.44	5	3.52
*Purchasing Furniture & Home Furnishings	6	3.58[a]	6	3.36[b]	7	3.25[b]
*Legal Rights/Influencing Change	7	3.58[a]	8	3.22[b]	10	3.17[b]
*Evaluating Home (comfort, privacy, security, convenience, storage)	8	3.57[a]	7	3.34[b]	9	3.21[b]
*Selecting Home Furnishings and equipment	9	3.49[a]	10	3.20[b]	8	3.23[ab]
*Use Decision Making in Housing	10	3.45[a]	9	3.21[b]	6	3.29[ab]
*Decorating/Limited Budget	11	3.44[a]	12	3.06[b]	16	2.95[b]
*Identifying & Evaluating House Info	12	3.28[a]	11	3.07[b]	11	3.17[ab]
*Adapting Housing/Furnishings for Special Needs in Life Cycle	13	3.23[a]	16	2.85[b]	15	3.01[b]
*Storage Principles	14	3.22[a]	13	3.01[b]	17	2.87[b]
*Housing Alternatives	15	3.17[a]	15	2.88[b]	12	3.16[a]
Goals, Standards, Values, Resources Influence Housing	16	3.09	14	2.91	13	3.11
*Government & Housing	17	3.09[a]	18	2.74[b]	19	2.64[b]
*Influence of Housing on Individual/Family	18	3.08[a]	17	2.83[b]	14	3.11[ab]
*Neighborhood	19	2.89[a]	19	2.59[b]	18	2.65[ab]
*Culture/Housing/Future	20	2.69[a]	20	2.44[b]	20	2.52[ab]

Scores were assigned as follows: 1 = not important, 2 = little importance, 3 = important, 4 = very important, 5 = essential

*Means with different superscripts (a, b, c) were significantly different at the five percent level in the Tukey-HSD test.

Key

Tables are color-keyed to show a significant difference between:

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Housing and Home Furnishings. *(See Table 9.)* This area ranked seventh by agency representatives and eighth by both parent groups. Although housing is not specifically mentioned as a priority in the federal legislation, conserving limited resources and making consumer choices is included. The financial/legal aspects of renting/owning and conserving energy are important in this content area. Economically disadvantaged parents felt eight of the 20 concepts were more important than the agency representatives thought they were (conserving energy, purchasing furniture and home furnishings, legal rights and influencing change, evaluating home, decorating/limited budget, storage principles, government and housing). The economically disadvantaged

Table 10. Percentage of Concepts with Significant Differences Between Groups

Content Area (# of Concepts)	Significant Differences Between Means		
	Econ/NonEcon	Econ/Agy	NonEcon/Agy
	%	%	%
Employability Skills (N = 10)	10.1	0.0	10.0
Child Development/Parenting (N = 21)	52.4	23.8	71.4
Mgt/Other Processes (N = 9)	11.1	22.2	0.0
Consumer Education (N = 17)	41.2	52.9	5.9
Family Relationships (N = 22)	36.4	0.0	31.8
Food & Nutrition (N = 19)	52.6	78.9	5.3
Clothing & Textiles (N = 18)	55.6	66.7	27.8
Housing/Home Furnishings (N = 20)	90.0	35.0	5.6
Total (N = 136)	48.5	36.8	22.8

Note: This table is interpreted as follows: There were 17 items in the questionnaire in the Consumer Education section. There was a significant difference between the economically disadvantaged parents and the non-economically disadvantaged parents in 41.2 percent of the items and a significant difference between the economically disadvantaged parents and agency representatives in 52.9 percent of the items in the questionnaire.

parents thought all except two of the concepts were more important than the other parent group (caring for the home and goals, standards, values, resources influence housing).

Table 10 gives a summary of the number of concepts in each content area in which there were differences between groups. As you can see from this table, there were fewer differences in the area of Employability Skills and Management and Other Processes. There were no differences between the economically disadvantaged parents and the agency representatives in the area of family relationships and employability skills.

Key Questions

Since the means for all three groups ranked the eight home economics content areas in approximately the same order, what consideration might be given to this ranking as course offerings are planned at the local level? For example: Are basic employability skills given emphasis in home economics course offerings?

Could employability skills be incorporated into the home economics program? Which skills should be included and at what level?

Are basic employability skills addressed in other offerings in the district? Are they offered in adult programs as well?

If the district has large numbers of economically disadvantaged students, are there concepts which should be given more emphasis within the home economics education program?

What clues are provided in the results that will help to determine which concepts are more essential for the economically disadvantaged? How can this be used at the local level?

According to the results included in this report are there concepts which appear to be important for all students regardless of their economic status?

How can management and other processes, such as critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making, be incorporated to a greater extent in all content areas?

Since the economically disadvantaged and the agency representatives see the needs differently, what steps can be taken to facilitate greater understanding?

Could social service workers advise clients to enroll in home economics education programs to meet their needs?

Conclusions And Recommendations

Conclusions

Using the overall means as a guide for the relative importance of each content area, all groups rank the content areas in approximately the same order: Employability Skills, Child Development/Parenting, Management/Other Processes, Consumer Education, Family Relationships, Food and Nutrition, Clothing and Textiles, and Housing and Home Furnishings. These areas roughly correspond with state and federal priorities. The strength of the means in each area indicate that all the concepts in home economics are important, very important, or essential. Because of time limits, it is difficult for home economics educators to select the most important content areas to teach. However, items within each content area vary in importance and educators may wish to select those concepts of greater importance. In addition, an examination of the 136 concepts in this study shows real differences in how important home economics content is to each group.

a. Generally speaking, economically disadvantaged parents saw home economics concepts as more important than the non-economically disadvantaged parents and social service agency representatives, except for the content area of Child Development/Parenting. In this case, the agency representatives saw home economics concepts as more important. This might be explained by the nature of the work and specific responsibilities of some of the agency representatives which include solving child abuse and neglect problems.

b. There was a significant difference between the economically disadvantaged parents and the non-economically disadvantaged parents in almost half of the 136 concepts (48.5 percent). Only two areas (Management/Other Processes and Employability Skills) had less than 12 percent of the concepts significantly different. *(See Table 10.)*

c. There was a significant difference between the economically disadvantaged and the agency representatives in slightly more than one-third of the 136 concepts (36.8 percent). However, no differences were evident in Employability Skills and Family Relationships concepts. *(See Table 10.)*

d. Generally speaking, the non-economically disadvantaged parents and agency representatives saw the concepts in a similar way. There was a significant difference between the non-economically disadvantaged and the agency representatives for less than one-fourth of the concepts (22.8 percent). There was no difference in the Management/Other Processes area and only differences in a few of the concepts in the areas of Consumer Education, Employability Skills, and Housing and Home Furnishings. *(See Table 10.)*

It is evident from the conclusions that home economics educators and others should examine the findings closely and determine how to improve their programs to better meet the needs of the economically disadvantaged students in our state. The researcher has made several recommendations, but suggests that home economics educators, administrators, and social service representatives examine the findings to determine specific information related to their concern and develop recommendations accordingly.

Recommendations

Given the present economic problems of Nebraska and the resulting problems for Nebraska families, teachers, schools administrators, and citizens in the community should be concerned about providing secondary students with information and skills that will enable them to cope with the problems they currently face and those they may face in the future. Current literature and the findings of this study related to the economically disadvantaged identifies these families as having concerns and needs that are related to the content areas taught in home economics. Effectiveness studies have shown that home economics can make a difference. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

a. People perceive the areas such as employability skills, management and other processes, child development and parenting, consumer education and family relationships as important, but they do not always understand that these are part of home economics. They do not understand how home economics looks at all the areas of family life in an integrated way. Home economics educators need to better explain their programs to the public and to make their programs more visible. They should particularly concentrate on the visibility of those areas not traditionally thought of as home economics. Home economics educators should also help students identify the concepts *and* processes they are learning so they will be able to communicate this to others.

b. Since all groups had a relatively similar order of importance for the content areas in home economics, home economics educators should place more weight on those areas of greater importance. Employability skills is one area that may need strengthening. Utilizing management and other processes to a greater degree may be another area that should be emphasized. There is evidence of an increased need in the areas of child development, parenting, and family relationships.

c. If economically disadvantaged individuals and families fail, there will be serious consequences for all citizens. The increasing number of households headed by minorities and single females may increase the need for teaching home economics concepts. Nebraska is not immune to this problem. Although home economics programs are open to everyone, typically large numbers of females and minorities enroll. This is an excellent opportunity to reach those who may need help today or in the future.

d. Since there are differences in the needs of students, home economics educators (teacher educators, curriculum writers, state department personnel, post-secondary and adult educators) should carefully select the home economics concepts that are appropriate for the socio-economic make-up of their intended audience.

e. Home economics teachers should examine their course offerings and adjust the curriculum according to the intended audience. Cosmetic changes can be done by changing the names of courses so individuals and families will have a better understanding of the area of home economics, but *substantial curriculum changes are also necessary*. Teachers should also investigate ways to cooperate with local social service agencies to enhance the services for students with special needs.

f. Administrators and guidance counselors should realize the level of importance of concept areas taught in home economics and encourage enrollment in the program for both economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students. Consideration should be given for increasing program offerings where serious economic problems exist. Administrators should also consider offering adult programs in their community in the area of home economics to help economically disadvantaged families. These programs could include combining home and family responsibilities, consumer education, child development and parenting, etc.

g. Social service agency administrators should examine the results of the study to determine if differences warrant further investigation or inservice education for selected workers. They may also want to investigate ways to educate their clients through home economics programs. They may want to make clients aware of home economics programs and their possible contributions to meeting the client's needs at the secondary, post-secondary and adult levels.

h. Home economics and social service professionals should work for greater communication, cooperation, and coordination of their programs. They should expand their communication efforts about what needs their clients have and the services they each can offer.

Key Questions

Since the strength of the means in each of the eight content areas indicated that all of the concepts listed in the questionnaire were important, very important, or essential, how can the ranking of the content areas and the ranking of concepts within each content area be used to help select content and processes which are important to teach?

What precautions must be kept in mind when interpreting and using the data included in this report to make curriculum decisions at the local level?

In general, economically disadvantaged parents saw home economics concepts as more important than non-economically disadvantaged parents saw those same concepts. How might this information be used in ongoing student recruitment and public relations efforts for the home economics education program?

How can more visibility be given to those content areas which are not traditionally thought of as home economics?

How might the needs of economically disadvantaged adults be addressed through the home economics program? Should adult education courses be offered by the local district or in cooperation with the technical community college area?

How can greater communication, cooperation, and coordination be achieved with social service agencies and other community agencies which address the needs of families?

How can home economics education and social service agencies work together to communicate the benefits which home economics education programs provide for individuals and families?

The needs of economically disadvantaged families are great and appear to be growing in today's economic climate. Home economics programs address many of their needs and research has shown that educational intervention makes a difference. Society cannot afford to let these individuals and families fail. We must take steps to prevent the problems and make a valuable contribution to improving the quality of life for all Nebraskans.

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Appendix Nebraska Home Economics Needs Survey

NEBRASKA HOME ECONOMICS NEEDS SURVEY

Directions:

Students enrolled in a high school home economics class may learn about housing, child development, consumer education, family relations, clothing, textiles, home furnishings, food, nutrition, and management. They may also learn a number of valuable processes, such as communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making.

This survey is designed to measure the importance of specific home economics content taught in junior high and high school home economics programs. Please circle the appropriate number which expresses how important you think each item is for high school students. You should answer all questions even if you do not have children in home economics classes. All of your answers will be kept in strict confidence.

How important is this content for students?

5 = Essential

4 = Very Important

3 = Important

2 = Little Importance

1 = Not Important

		Not Important	Little Importance	Important	Very Important	Essential
A.	**Consumer Education**					
1.	Consumer rights and responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The relationship between the consumer and the economy (supply and demand, inflation and recession)	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The availability of consumer resources (Extension, Better Business Bureau, Social Services)	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Developing and staying within a budget	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Managing a checking account	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Financial record keeping	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Comparing savings options (interest, accessibility, convenience)	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Use and cost of credit	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Insurance (health, auto, life, disability, home)	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Taxes and social security	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Transportation (purchasing, leasing, costs of operation, maintenance, insurance)	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Consumer information sources (labels, product coding, warranties, guarantees, magazines)	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Comparative pricing (unit pricing, brand names)	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Advertising (purposes, techniques used, analyzing claims)	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Comparison of stores, services, and goods (freedom to choose or refuse)	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Consumer problems (deception, fraud)	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Questioning the spending patterns of self, peers, community and society.	1	2	3	4	5
B.	**Management and Other Processes**					
1.	Determining personal and family values, goals, resources and standards	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Exploring a variety of alternatives for problem solving	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Developing the ability to make decisions and solve problems effectively	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Using the management process (planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Managing of personal and family resources (time, money, energy, skills, and talents)	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Simplifying work to conserve time and energy	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Developing an attitude of becoming responsible for one's own decisions	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Coping with changes in one's own personal life, the community and society including those changes which may be considered as crises	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Evaluating claims made by "authorities" in the media (newpapers, magazines, books, television)	1	2	3	4	5
C.	**Basic Employability Skills**					
1.	Developing the skills and behaviors which contribute to employability and job success	1	2	3	4	5

	1 Not Important	2 Little Importance	3 Important	4 Very Important	5 Essential
2. Improving one's personal appearance in order to be more employable.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Assessing personal characteristics and skills to identify a suitable job/career	1	2	3	4	5
4. Exploring various career possibilities related to one's interests and abilities	1	2	3	4	5
5. Becoming knowledgeable of job training and educational opportunities in one's chosen job/career/field	1	2	3	4	5
6. How to look for a job (job hunting techniques)	1	2	3	4	5
7. Job application skills (letter of inquiry, application blank, resume, references, interviewing)	1	2	3	4	5
8. Using effective communication skills required by the job	1	2	3	4	5
9. Maintaining satisfactory relationships with employer, employees, and customers	1	2	3	4	5
10. Combining home and job responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
D. Food and Nutrition					
1. Planning, preparing and serving nutritious attractive meals	1	2	3	4	5
2. Considering time, cost, and energy in planning and preparing meals	1	2	3	4	5
3. Planning and organizing for food buying (shopping lists, seasonal foods, use of ads and specials, unit pricing, coupons)	1	2	3	4	5
4. Staying within the food budget	1	2	3	4	5
5. Nutritional needs of various family members throughout the life cycle (children, aged, pregnancy, special diets)	1	2	3	4	5
6. The relationship between nutrition and wellness	1	2	3	4	5
7. Comparing similar foods for costs, convenience, and nutritive value	1	2	3	4	5

	1 Not Important	2 Little Importance	3 Important	4 Very Important	5 Essential
8. Understanding factors affecting food choices (media, peers, lifestyle, customs, tradition, and personal preference)	1	2	3	4	5
9. Understanding how to change family food habits to encourage more healthful/healthier eating	1	2	3	4	5
10. Analyzing the nutritional claims of food and popular diets in radio, television, newspaper and magazine advertising	1	2	3	4	5
11. Understanding the relationship between caloric intake, exercise and weight control	1	2	3	4	5
12. Analyzing/evaluating "popular" diets to determine if they are healthy	1	2	3	4	5
13. Preparing and storing foods to retain nutrient quality, appearance and safety	1	2	3	4	5
14. Safe and sanitary food handling in the kitchen	1	2	3	4	5
15. Conserving energy in food preparation	1	2	3	4	5
16. Selecting, using and caring for small and large equipment in the kitchen	1	2	3	4	5
17. Preserving food by canning, freezing or drying	1	2	3	4	5
18. Knowing about consumer agencies in the community that provide information about food at little or no cost	1	2	3	4	5
19. The relationship between world food supply, world hunger and population growth.	1	2	3	4	5
E. Housing and Home Furnishings					
1. Being informed of housing alternatives (single family dwelling, mobile home, apartment, etc)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Understanding how goals, standards, values, and resources influence a person's selection of a home	1	2	3	4	5
3. Identifying and evaluating housing information from a variety of sources (realtors, lending agencies, public agencies, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
4. Using the decision making and problem solving processes in making housing decisions	1	2	3	4	5

		Not Important	Little Importance	Important	Very Important	Essential
5.	Selecting suitable and affordable housing based on individual and family needs and preferences	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Realizing the influence of housing on individuals and families (self concept, goals, social status, communication, social interaction)	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Evaluating the home for comfort, privacy, security, convenience and storage	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Understanding the financial and legal aspects of owning or renting a home	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Selecting home furnishings and equipment to meet individual and family needs	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Determining quality when purchasing furniture and home furnishings	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Using storage principles in the home	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Caring for the interior and exterior of a home (maintenance and repair)	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Making the home a safe place	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Conserving energy inside and outside the home	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Decorating on a limited budget	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Being informed of legal rights and responsibilities related to housing and taking action to influence change	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Adapting housing and furnishings for individual and family needs throughout various stages of the life cycle (handicapped, elderly, children)	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Understanding the relationship of culture and tradition in housing as well as future housing trends	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Understanding how to shape or control your neighborhood environment	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Understanding how the government is involved in housing	1	2	3	4	5

F. Child Development/Parenting

		Not Important	Little Importance	Important	Very Important	Essential
1.	Recognizing the reponsibilities involved in parenting (financial, emotional) and being aware that it is an option	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Examining one's readiness to be a parent	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Understanding that one's present choices or decisions may affect future opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Applying the decision making process to family planning decisions	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Identifying effective methods of birth control	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Understanding conception, prenatal development and the birth process	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Examining the conflicting views of how to raise a child	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Selecting/using appropriate child-rearing practices based on child development principles	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Examining the social and cultural influences on parenting and a child's behavioral development	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Understanding how children develop morals	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Understanding the impact of parenting, discipline and life experiences on self-esteem	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Understanding a child's physical, social, emotional and intellectual development	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Understanding the influence of the environment on children (home and neighborhood)	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Understanding the influence of heredity on children	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Using safety and first aid practices	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Preventing and reporting child abuse	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Selecting appropriate day care or nursery school services	1	2	3	4	5

		1 Not Important	2 Little Importance	3 Important	4 Very Important	5 Essential
18.	Identifying community services which promote support to children and families	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Examining how the quality of parenting affects society	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Developing creativity in children	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Understanding the relationship between nutrition and maternal and child health	1	2	3	4	5

G. **Family Relationships**

1.	Building effective relationships with all family members through cooperation, compromising and understanding	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Understanding the changes in the family life cycle.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Identifying special needs of individuals in the family (handicapped, elderly)	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Resolving family conflict	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Managing crisis situations effectively	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Identifying the changing and multiple roles of individuals in families and society	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Identifying readiness for serious commitments (career, marriage, parenting)	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Recognizing the functions or purposes of a family	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Understanding varying family structures (single parent, extended family, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Identifying characteristics desired in a mate or life partner	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Identifying sources of support in the community	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Understanding the differences and similarities of families from different cultures	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Choosing a personal lifestyle by considering individual values	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Understanding how stereotyping other people limits oneself	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Understanding the laws and regulations affecting families	1	2	3	4	5

		1 Not Important	2 Little Importance	3 Important	4 Very Important	5 Essential
16.	Using effective communication skills in family relationships	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Having realistic expectations for family relationships	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Respecting and caring for the elderly	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Preventing family violence and abuse	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Using the family group to make decisions and solve problems	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Understanding human sexuality	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Identifying one's attitude and emotions and their impact on others	1	2	3	4	5

H. **Clothing and Textiles**

1.	Understanding reasons for clothing choices (social, emotional, cultural, environmental)	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Understanding the influence of advertising on clothing choice	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Understanding the influence of fads and fashion	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Discriminating between needs and wants of clothing	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Using the decision making and problem solving processes in making clothing decisions	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Identifying and selecting clothing to meet the needs and preferences of various family members throughout the life cycle (children, handicapped, elderly)	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Identifying ways to obtain clothing	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Understanding consumer rights and responsibility in purchasing clothing and textile products	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Choosing individual and family clothing within a budget	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Using information on clothing and textile labels	1	2	3	4	5

		Not Important	Little Importance	Important	Very Important	Essential
11.	Understanding textile information (fiber characteristics, fabric construction, fabric finishes)	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Evaluating fabric and construction quality	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Understanding color, line and design and its affect upon appearance	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Altering and fitting patterns	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Sewing clothes for self and family	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Altering and recycling clothing	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Maintaining family clothing and textiles (laundry, cleaning, mending, ironing, storage)	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Selection, use and care of equipment necessary for constructing and maintaining clothing and textile purchases	1	2	3	4	5

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PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please place an "X" in the appropriate blank to answer the following questions. You may leave any item blank which you prefer not to answer.

How many children do you have?

____ 0 ____ 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 or more

Have one or more of your children taken home economics courses?

_____ Yes _____ No

Do you have a student(s) currently enrolled in a home economics course?

_____ Yes _____ No

Did you take one or more home economics courses in high school?

_____ Yes _____ No

Sex of person completing this questionnaire

_____ Male _____ Female

Please indicate your highest level of education (check one only)

____ did not attend high school

____ some high school

____ high school graduate

____ Occupational Preparation School

____ some college

____ college graduate

____ advanced study

____ advanced degree

____ Other _____ (Be Specific)

What is your occupation?

_____

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey. If you have other comments regarding the content for home economics programs, please feel free to add this information on the back of this questionnaire.

Please mail this questionnaire in the enclosed envelope to:

Julie M. Johnson
133 Home Economics
University of Nebraska
Lincoln, NE 68583-0801

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